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# CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE

## CLERGY

OF THE

DIOCESE OF SARUM

AT THE

PRIMARY VISITATION

OF THAT

DIOCESE,

IN THE YEAR MDCC LXXX III,

BY

*K. Barrington (H. 16)*

SHUTE LORD BISHOP OF SARUM.

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OXFORD:

MDCC LXXX III.



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REVEREND BRETHREN,

**I**NDEBTED solely, under Providence, to the gracious opinion of His Majesty for the distinguished situation in which his goodness has placed me, I can neither too publicly avow, nor too warmly express my gratitude; which will be best expressed by an immediate endeavour to answer the purposes of my appointment.

WITH this view, I have seized the earliest opportunity of holding my primary visitation; urged by my own sense of duty; the respect owing to this my native diocese; and an earnest desire of becoming acquainted with my Clergy.

WHEN I contemplate the very superior abilities of some who have preceded me in this See; when I reflect that it has been filled by a Burnet, a Hoadly, and a Sherlock;

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I cannot, while I feel a veneration for their memories, but feel also a degree of awe at being elevated into their seat; conscious of powers which bear no proportion to theirs. But though I lament the inferiority of those powers; yet I will not yield, even to them, in zeal for the honour of religion; in attention to the means by which it may most effectually be maintained; in attachment to the just rights of The Church of England; or in promoting the credit of a Clergy, whose esteem it will be my pride to obtain: who I trust will interpret both my language now, and my conduct hereafter with that candour which is ever the characteristic of ingenuous and liberal dispositions.

PERMIT me to assure you, Reverend Brethren, that I enter upon my office with an ardent wish of contributing to the general welfare, and that of each individual among you; of being considered as the common friend of all; and with a determination of declining no trouble where I can be of service. My ears shall ever be open to information, and my mind to conviction. My judgments both of men and things shall be founded on facts and evidence; and I will know

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no distinctions but those which result from character.

As I cannot either on this, or any future similar occasion, satisfactorily discharge my duty without reminding you of yours, my resolution is, never to select any curious topic of speculation, unconnected with the valuable purposes of these meetings; but to recall your attention to the solemn engagements you entered into at your ordination; to employ it on such general questions as the importance of the Parochial Minister's character to the interests of religion requires; or the peculiar circumstances of this diocese, when I become better acquainted with them, demand. Little solicitous about the elegance of composition, I am anxious in the extreme to deliver my sentiments with simplicity and freedom: anxious that you should believe my expressions flow from a real regard towards you; from a wish that you should never forget what you owe to God, to men, to yourselves, and to your country; and that you should constantly act under the clearest conviction how impossible it is for you to promote your own interests temporal and eternal, by any other method so effectually as by conscientiously

endeavouring to discharge your duty by those, with whom you stand connected by the most solemn ties, and the most sacred obligations.

THE first object of a Parochial Minister should be to gain the esteem, the affection and the confidence of his people. The good opinion of the world will follow of course. Without these his labours will be fruitless, and even his virtues ineffectual. Difficult as this may seem, and much more difficult as it has at times been represented, it is yet far easier than is too commonly supposed. The pains he may bestow upon the acquisition will be amply repaid by every advantage a good mind would wish to derive from that application which it owes as a debt of justice to others, personal comfort, and public benefit. Mankind are neither so perverse nor so ungrateful as not to feel in some degree that merit which is exerted in their service; and though perhaps they may neither acknowledge nor improve by it as they ought; yet they will internally reverence the steady sober Christian zeal which they perceive animating the labours of their Minister to make them good, and happy. Our passions misguide our reasonings on this as well as every other subject;



ject; they give their own colouring to our opinions; and incline us to adopt too readily a contrary supposition from the flattery which it offers to our indolence.

THAT immediate or universal success should attend the most active, the best directed pains, is what neither Reason nor Revelation lead us to expect; but there is the highest authority for believing that perseverance in ministerial as well as every other species of well doing will finally attain its pursuit; and, that in the end, the true "Labourer in the Lord's harvest, if he faint not, will certainly reap."

SINCE his own happiness, and the religious improvement of those whom Providence has consigned to his care, depend upon the opinion they entertain of his heart and understanding; upon the ideas they form of his character as a man, and his behaviour as a Clergyman; upon the proofs they discover of attention or of negligence in his private life and public ministrations; how careful ought he to be in all these points! How solicitous, in the energetic language of the ordination service, that neither he himself offend, nor is  
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the cause that others offend ! The reflection, that his utility, and the very existence of religion among them owe their origin and continuance to the favourable impression which his people receive, must dictate and enforce such a temper and such a conduct as will gain their esteem by convincing them that he is in reality what his appointment to their parish implies, and what he has so solemnly promised to be, their spiritual director, adviser and friend ; exemplifying in his own life and manners the Christian doctrines which he teaches, and the Christian virtues he recommends to them.

As diligence in fulfilling the engagements he virtually made at his institution will operate most powerfully in his favour, so an inattention to them will inevitably injure him in the opinion of his people. If they see him lead an idle trifling life, they will despise both his person and instructions. I do not mean that every moment of his time should be employed in the concerns of his parish. All fair allowances must be made for those necessary avocations, those reasonable relaxations which the state of human nature requires, and the Gospel permits : but the largest  
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portion of his time, thoughts, and endeavours should be directed to the infusing a just spirit of Religion among his people, to the convincing them of the folly as well as of the wickedness of sin ; that while it precludes them from the joys of a future world, it is sure to injure their most valuable interests in this ; and that, if they wish to be happy, even in this life, they must be good.

IDLENESS is inconsistent with, and incapacitates the Parish Priest from a due discharge of every part of his important office ; which ranks among the very first in the state, if rank be estimated by the value of the office to the benefit of the Community. The exertion of all his powers, of all his industry, are requisite for the due performance of the work he has undertaken. The employment to which he has under the most sacred vows dedicated himself, is reclaiming the vicious, awakening the secure, satisfying the doubtful, strengthening the wavering, recovering the fallen, being useful to all.

To attain these important objects of his Ministry, and to make his people sensible that he is not inactive in their service, he must study their dispositions, observe the vices  
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most prevalent among them ; try to discover and apply the remedies. Public instruction alone, unassisted by private advice, seasonably and discreetly given, will never so thoroughly gain the affections and better the hearts of his people, as to make them what he must wish them to be, either for their happiness, or his own. He will soon perceive the beneficial consequences resulting from such a plan of conduct ; they are too obvious to require a distinct specification ; they will more than compensate for any trouble they may cost ; by the respect and influence they will create ; by the wonderful facility they will give to all his endeavours ; by the pleasing approbation of his own mind, and by the favour of God.

OPPOSED to idleness is activity misemployed on improper objects, and pursued to that excess in procuring secular emoluments as to degenerate into worldly-mindedness. This vice (for a vice it certainly is in a Clergyman) tends equally with the former to diminish his weight with his people ; to preclude all means of doing them service ; and eventually, to defeat the effects of any good qualities he may chance to possess. Let me not be misunderstood. It is the too eager,  
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too inordinate love of this world ; that love of it which interferes with known acknowledged duty, against which this caution is levelled ; not against the fair reasonable advantages to which the Clergy in common with the rest of mankind are entitled from their profession. The dedication of their time and talents to the service of God, and the good of his creatures, has it's claim to something more than bare support ; to a just proportion of worldly comforts with the rest of their fellow citizens. For hard indeed would be our lot, if we were debarred from those advantages which the industrious in every other situation of life are sure to acquire.

THIS unhappy disposition of worldly-mindedness peculiarly disqualifies us from the efficacious discharge of our function ; it contracts the mind instead of enlarging it to the full measure of that extensive benevolence which the Gospel so engagingly inculcates ; it betrays us into a variety of meanness, unworthy our character, and sinks us below that estimation, which if we would preserve our dignity or our usefulness, we must support ; and exposes us to that dislike and contempt, which if we are not callous to every finer

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sensation of our nature we must both feel and lament.

UNDER these two opposite extremes may fairly be comprehended all that relates to the general conduct of each individual towards his people. They prescribe the rules for forming his temper, and behaviour, and point out the means by which he may ensure esteem and success.

BEFORE I close what I have to offer on this head, let it not be imagined I descend beneath the dignity which the occasion of our meeting, the assembly itself, the speaker, or the place demand, if I hint to the younger part of my audience, and it originates not from particular, but from general observation, the necessity of attention to that decent becoming simplicity of dress and apparel which the Church of England enjoins her Ministers to observe, which strikes the eye of every beholder, and which in conjunction with the superior influence of the higher branches of duty, will conciliate the opinion of their own people, and the world at large.

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THE happy effects of avoiding whatever can lessen the credit of the Parochial Minister, and of steadily pursuing a contrary plan will not be confined within the limits of our own communion ; they will extend to those who differ from us either in the essentials of faith, or in the mode of worship, and the fundamentals of Church government. Nor will they operate less powerfully in preserving his flock from the seduction to which it will otherwise be exposed from persons of another description ; persons, who profess the most rigid piety ; who propagate their wild conceits with much eagerness ; who charge the Parochial Clergy with not adhering to the purity of Religion either in doctrine or in practice ; but who themselves vent the most extravagant notions, as repugnant to the genius and the precepts of the Gospel, as they are to that reason which they vilify and despise ; who in an authoritative tone excite groundless fears and groundless hopes, indispose the people to listen to the instructions of their minister, and teach them to undervalue his ordinances ; and in defiance of that Ecclesiastical authority of which they pretend at times to be so scrupulously observant, both



preach and pray out of the Church,\* to which the wisdom of our Establishment has so prudently restrained it; and who, finally, cause that schism of which they declare themselves the most strenuous opposers. How or when all these irregularities and evils, the united product of ignorance of the nature of Christianity, of misguided zeal, and ungoverned enthusiasm, will terminate, it may not be easy to conjecture. But as they cannot but give real pain to every sober believer, may God grant, that they do not encrease through our faults! May he induce each of us in our several stations to bring this matter home to our own breasts; and to ask ourselves these serious questions! Have I conscientiously discharged my duty as a Minister of Christ? Have I by negligence, by worldly-mindedness, by levity of behaviour, by undue attachment to the pleasures and the gayeties of life, by an inattentive or precipitate performance of my public ministrations, or by any other vice or fault given advantage to those who seek advantage against me? May not indifference and lukewarmness in me in the support and extension of genuine righte-

\* Canons, 71, 72.

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ousness, have been in pretence, if not in reality, one cause of a heated overrighteousness in them? Let it not here be imagined that I intend censure where I only mean caution. I wish to put all upon their guard against opinions, which were they once to obtain universally would subvert every thing valuable in society, in government, and in Religion.

BUT though we should exert our diligence to prevent our people's being infected by the absurd and pernicious notions to which I have alluded, we should shew all possible tenderness to those who maintain them. We may then perhaps in the event persuade them, but we shall certainly persuade others, that it is their opinions alone which we oppose from a conviction of their alarming tendency; and they who are not too far gone in enthusiasm may be regained to the sober truth as it is in Christ Jesus, by the exertion of a genuine zeal, who were misled into error by the display of an adulterated one. And what may justly merit our most serious consideration, if they gain proselytes by mistaking this principle and applying it to false objects; we surely may with equal success counteract their attempts,



tempts, by directing it temperately, steadily, and judiciously to true ones. Should there chance among those who hear me to be any who have adopted the opinions hinted at, and who make them the standard of their faith and practice, they will allow me with the tenderness of a man, who pities their mistakes, to remind them that they do not sufficiently distinguish in reading the New Testament, and applying it's language, between men and things in the infancy of the Gospel, and it's present state ; between the apostolical powers and their own. They unhappily forget that the extraordinary operations of the Holy Spirit have long since ceased ; that it's ordinary effects are consistent with our free agency ; and are not manifested in fancied impulses or imaginary calls, but in the more certain evidence of it's fruits, a good life. They forget that to stretch themselves beyond their proper line, and to intrude into the province of other men is unauthorized and unwarrantable : since every minister is accountable to his great Master for the trust committed to his charge. They should remember likewise, that by unsettling the minds of their followers as to Christian virtue and good works ; fixing them on visionary notions of an inactive faith ; destroying their utility in perform-



performing the duties of common life, so valuable in the sight of God when properly performed ; and by substituting the dreams of a warm imagination in the place of the clear decisions of the Gospel, and the cool determinations of the judgment with respect to the state of their souls, they retard instead of advancing the cause they would be thought most anxiously to serve : and finally let them reflect while the best friends of Revelation behold with concern the injuries it receives through their errors, what triumph they afford to it's most inveterate enemies.

The topics on which I have hitherto insisted presuppose residence on your respective cures. New to my present situation, and unapprised of the state of residence in the diocese, my sentiments cannot be considered as arising from doubt or mistrust. I hope to find it what I earnestly wish, for your own credit, for that of your order, for the benefit of your people, for the expectations of the world. Residence necessarily results from the very idea of an established Clergy. The mansion, the glebe, the endowment, manifest the intention of the founders of Churches, and of the legislature

ture. The pious views of the former were confirmed by the civil wisdom of the latter; each discerning that the real purposes of religion could never be promoted but by a resident Clergy. Cogent as these motives must be on worthy minds, there are others which will affect them still more powerfully; the solemn engagements expressly stipulated at ordination, and virtually at institution.

The substitute, especially the temporary or occasional one, can never with equal efficacy supply the absence of his principal. Can the substitute have so deep an interest in the affection or the religious concerns of the parish as the appointed Minister? can he enter so properly or with the same weight into many of the most important parts of Parochial duty? Can his public or his private instructions; can his secret exhortations and admonitions (that essential branch of the pastoral office) flow from the same accurate knowledge of the persons addressed, and from which alone they can derive their efficacy? Can the same relief be administered to the necessities of the poor? Can there be the same interposition to prevent or accommodate disputes? Can that variety of mutual good offices subsist, which give such  
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respect to the Pastor, such comfort to the Flock?

WHAT I have advanced on this subject will not be misunderstood as extending indiscriminately to all incumbents, but must from its nature be varied according to the exigence of each case. The opportunity of making every benefice an adequate provision for the Minister was unhappily and irretrievably lost at the Reformation. The poverty of some livings therefore does not allow the residence of a distinct minister in all. The evil under such circumstances must however be remedied as far as it will admit. They who accept a plurality of benefices are bound to divide their time and labours ; at least, occasionally to visit each ; and to compensate for their absence by every method in their power ; especially by the choice of a proper Curate. It is almost superfluous to add that no motives should influence this choice but the fitness of the person, and the good of your people.

So many serious inconveniences accrue from the practice of introducing Curates from other dioceses without testimonials, without notice,

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and without inspection of letters of Orders, that I must intreat your attention to the following regulation.

THAT no Curate be employed from another diocese unless the incumbent assure me under his hand that he is previously satisfied, from actual examination, with the testimonial and letters of orders.

NONE, I trust, can misconceive my intention in wishing to establish this regulation. It is not only founded in law, but in the obvious advantages which result from it. The bare mention will suggest the propriety of a Bishop's being informed who serves every church in his diocese. His ignorance as to this point may be productive of the following consequences; men unequal to the duty; men of bad characters; nay, men unordained, may officiate. Any precaution on this last head, one could have hoped needless, had not the frequent instances of imposition rendered it necessary.

To obviate the difficulties to which candidates for orders are exposed, from ignorance of the papers they are to transmit to me; and  
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to assist the inexperience of the younger Clergy, as to the modes of proceeding before and after institution ; previous to obtaining licences; and other points of a similar nature; I have collected into one view, and printed for their use all the different requisites, which either the law demands, or I expect. I have in this instance, as I pledge myself to do in every other, when in my power, consulted the ease and convenience of my Clergy, by an endeavour to promote a spirit of order and regularity, without which no business, whether public or private can be carried on.

THE doubt and obscurity in which the evidence of some of the most incontestible and clearest rights of the Clergy have occasionally been involved, from the neglect of accurately making, and regularly depositing authentic terriers in *The Bishop's Registry*, has induced me to recommend and facilitate the drawing of them up in a prescribed form. The ease with which it may be done, and the benefits your successors may possibly derive from lights you give, incline me to hope that you will readily comply with a request which can have no motive but the ascertaining your indisputable claims.



THE reversal by the House of Lords of the judgments of the courts of Common Pleas and King's Bench; both of which held themselves bound, in conformity to a series of determinations, to pronounce general bonds of resignation legal, is an event, on which I cannot but congratulate not only the whole body of the Clergy, but every friend to decency, every well-wisher to religion of every persuasion. The limits to which I must confine myself will not permit me to enter into this subject in the present moment, further, than to touch upon the situation in which a general bond of resignation might place the person who was so unadvised as to give one. Though the question previous to this decision was in fact a question of conscience and not of law, yet the long established sanction of Westminster Hall induced the presentee too frequently to listen to the reasoning of his lawyer, and the authority of courts, rather than to the suggestions of his own mind, and the interpretations of his own understanding, with regard to the oath against Simony. Blinded by the flattering pursuit of immediate possession of an unexpected benefice, oppressed perhaps by poverty, and urged by the calls of a numerous family, he did not consider



der the guilt he incurred ; foresee the future inconveniencies to which he was exposed ; nor the penalties and the loss of reputation to which he was subject. From the instant he accepted institution, fettered by a general bond, he was taken out of the protection of the law ; and instead of holding his benefice as a freehold, he held it at the arbitrary will of another, on the terms of absolute submission and implicit obedience. He was precluded from the discharge of many of the various duties incident to the ministerial office ; from the preaching doctrines which the master of his fortune disliked ; from the inculcating virtues which he never practised ; from the reproof of vices to which he was notoriously addicted ; and who expected, in addition to all this, the sacrifice of every right, and every comfort which an unconditional presentation confers. But the most liberal concessions, and the most unbounded compliances were insufficient to secure a permanent continuance in the living, the instant the patron wished to enrich himself by the sale. He had then only to demand an immediate avoidance. The wretched Clerk was compelled to submit, and to return to his primæval poverty ; bereaved of character, the approbation of his own heart and the opinion of the world.

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BUT it becomes me to hasten towards a conclusion; intreating your pardon for having trespassed thus long upon your time and patience, and trusting that you will accept as an excuse that I have only a triennial opportunity of delivering my sentiments on those subjects which I conceive essentially to affect your credit and your interests.

IN all that I have now submitted to your consideration, Reverend Brethren; in any measure I may hereafter pursue in the relation I have the honour to bear you, be persuaded that I shall be actuated by no motive but an unaffected zeal for your welfare, the good of the Diocese, and the promotion of Religion. Your interests and mine are inseparable; and we should unitedly cooperate in one common cause, the moral improvement of mankind; the discountenancing of vice, the recommendation of virtue, with all the additional advantages she derives from the sanctions of the Gospel.

IF ever there was a period in the annals of this country, at which it was more peculiarly incumbent on the Clergy "to take heed to their ways," it is the present. Shameless profligacy, avowed libertinism, infidelity, and superstition in every shape are making a most alarming progress. The only human means  
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by which these actual evils may be removed, or the impending mischiefs which result from them averted, are the lives and the labours of the Clergy. If we consider our respective situations in the Church as producing such an income, on which we may live as laymen, without regarding the spiritual offices annexed, and for the conscientious discharge of which it is the appointed recompense; if by idleness and levity on the one hand; or an immoderate attachment to the emoluments of this life on the other, we appear to have relinquished all thoughts of a better, we shall forfeit the protection of heaven, and the esteem of good men; while we stand exposed to the attacks of the bad.

BUT if we really feel, and act as if we felt, the principles of the Gospel; if we adopt them into our lives and manners; form them into habits of Christian virtue; make them the only rule of our conduct; forego any pleasure or any profit which may interfere with an uniform attention to the spiritual interests of our people; we may then rest assured, that we shall have the universal reverence of mankind. The virtuous will look up to us with respect as instruments in the hand of the Almighty, for the extension of his kingdom upon earth; as diffusing the blessings of peace,  
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righteousness and truth among our fellow creatures; the wicked, and the most hostile to the Gospel and our order, will be compelled to confess our utility in exciting the hopes and alarming the fears of the multitude; that we strengthen the authority of the magistrate; and promote the beneficial ends of civil regulation, and good government by the dread of a future retribution.

IT behoves us then, Reverend Brethren, to reflect most seriously on what we owe to our own people, to the world, to our own characters, to our profession, and to God. Animated by these governing principles, we shall delight in a ministry which will prove a never failing source of internal comfort, springing up in the mind, to cheer and relieve it under the pressure of those difficulties with which we must occasionally struggle; but which we shall be enabled to surmount, by the grace of God; by the conscious reflection of having done our best; by the prospect of that reward which we know will crown our most painful exertions in the glorious cause of religion; and by the certainty of that state of bliss, which will continue uninterrupted and increasing when this scene, it's riches, it's pleasures, and it's honours shall be no more.

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